youths in Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) There is no such scheme. However, basic postal facilities are provided in some rural areas through Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana in which the Panchayats, in turn may utilise the services of the educated unemployed for discharging such functions.

(b) to (d): Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Telephones in rural areas of Thane in Maharashtra

1317. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of villages, percentage-wise where Gram Panchayats have been provided telephones in the rural areas of Thane district of Maharashtra;

(b) whether it is a fact that a large number of telephones in the Gram Panchayats are non functional if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to achieve total implementation of the scheme in the above district, alongwith appropriate monitoring of the functional aspects?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) 943 Gram Panchayat Villages in rural areas of Thane district of Maharashtra are having a village Public Telephone. 50.8% of the Gram Panchayats villages are having telephones in rural areas of Thane District.

(b) 350 Gram Panchayats Telephones are faulty. These are expected to be rectified by the end of January, 1997.

(c) Another 235 villages will be covered upto March, 1997. Making total of 1178 out of 1856 villages. Balance villages would be covered in the IXth Plan. All efforts are being taken to see that they function properly by regularly monitoring it.

Amount earmarked for Irrigation Project

1318. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided upon a Rs. 900 crore irrigation plan for the current year;

(b) if so, the details of the plan; and

(c) the steps taken are being taken in pursuance thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. An amount of Rs. 900 crores has been provided in the budget of Ministry of Water Resources for 1996-97 for giving Central Loan Assistance to the state Governments under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits programme (AIBP) for accelerating implementation of large irrigation and multi-purpose projects costing more than Rs. 1000 crores which are beyond the resources capability of the States (Rs. 800 crores) and for completion of other projects which are in advanced stage of completion and with just a little additional resources, the project could be completed and farmers could got the benefit of assured water supply to 1,00,000 ha. in one of the next four agricultural seasons (Rs. 100 crores). Only those projects which have received investment clearance from the Planning Commission are eligible for funding under this Programme. The State Governments are required to provide equal funds from their resources.

(c) The State Governments were requested to forward their proposals for inclusion under the Programme to this Ministry. Thereafter, a meeting with the officials of the State Governments was held on 12.10.96. This was followed by